

Mayor's Messages

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"Campaign for Sight in the Dark" Receives Helping Hand from Local Communities, Companies

Mayor Luken, the Cincinnati Rotary Club, and others have partnered in an effort to fulfill Mayor Luken's goal of purchasing one thermal imaging camera for each of Cincinnati's 26 firehouses, and to be the first city in the nation to accomplish this important goal.

Thermal Imaging Cameras are the latest innovation in fire fighting technology. In the wake of the death of Cincinnati firefighter, Oscar Armstrong, III, the campaign to bring this new, lifesaving device to every Cincinnati firehouse seems to take on extra urgency. The cameras can be used to help firefighters determine the source of a fire within a burning building and to locate trapped victims, among other uses.

Already, \$110,000 of City money has been allocated for this cause, and the Rotary Club of Cincinnati has pledged to raise a total of \$500,000.



This is an example of a Thermal Imaging Camera used by fire departments across the country to save lives.

The Cincinnati fire department already owns twelve cameras, but that still leaves twenty-seven of the City's engines and ladder trucks unequipped. The half million dollars pledged by the Rotary Club will not only be used to acquire cameras for the remaining trucks

and ladders but some of the money will be spent on other forms of new technology for the City's fire department, including equipment which would allow firefighters on the engines and ladder trucks to see what the firefighters inside are seeing through the thermal imaging cameras.

The campaign by the Rotary Club, headed by Doug Adams, kicked off on March 29, 2003 and will run for 150 days, ending on August 26. Both businesses and private individuals are encouraged to donate to the campaign.

To donate or help raise money, please contact Doug Adams with US Bank at 513-632-4806 for more information.

Mayor's Website Adds More Content

The Mayor's website is currently under construction! We are working to provide the citizens of Cincinnati and other visitors to our website with the best possible information about what's happening in City Hall and around the City.

The plans for the revised web

site include an updated and expanded contact page, which will include not only the information necessary to reach Mayor Luken, but also the information needed to contact his staff.

Also on the new web page will be a new section called "Major Initiatives" which

will explain the purpose and detail the progress of such mayoral initiatives as the expansion of the Convention Center and the success of the Empowerment Zone.

We hope that everyone will take a minute to check out the changes that have been made at www.cincinnati-oh.gov.

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CINCINNATI BY THE DATES

- 6/22: *Last Day to Catch the Butterfly Show at Krohn Conservatory*
- 7/4: *All American Birthday Party at Sawyer Point*
- 7/26: *Goldstar Chilifest*
- 8/16: *Bengals First Pre-season Home Game*
- 8/31: *Riverfest*
- 9/21: *Oktoberfest*
- 9/28: *Final Reds Homegame*
- 10/15: *Kickoff of Tall Stacks*
- 12/28: *Bengals vs. Browns*

MAYOR AND VICE-MAYOR FORM ELECTION REFORM COMMISSION

Responding to various requests and inquiries from citizens of Cincinnati, the Mayor and Vice-Mayor are forming a commission to examine all facets of electoral reform in Cincinnati.

Proposals on the table include changing the way Council is elected to district representation or to proportional representation (P.R.). Such proposals have been considered in the past, but have recently been discussed by various community organizations as ways to increase interaction between citizens and Councilmembers.

Also included in the discussion is the executive Mayor form of government. In May of 1999, Cincinnati changed to a stronger Mayor form of government, but stopped short of increasing the Mayor's powers to executive levels. Cities such as New York, Columbus, and Baltimore have executive Mayors without City Managers.

Oakland recently increased the powers of their Mayor and eliminated the City Manager position. Mayor Jerry Brown, however, was so comfortable with his City Man-

ager that he hired him as his Chief Operating Officer for the City.



Additionally, there is currently a movement among some Cincinnati neighborhood leaders to convert Cincinnati's Councilmembers to district representation, rather than the current at-large system.

The Electoral Reform Commission will be composed of thirteen members, nine of which will be appointed by political parties. Charterites, Republicans and Democrats will each appoint three with the consent of Council.

The Mayor will then choose four

more members from the community, and select a chair from the group. These candidates will also have to be confirmed by Council.

The motion, approved unanimously on June 11, 2003, dictates that the commission be appointed by Council's summer recess, and asks for a final report from the commission by February 1, 2004.

Any changes to the electoral system or system of government requires a charter change. Charter changes can happen if six Councilmembers vote to put the issue on the ballot, and it is passed by a majority of the population.

The issue could also be put on the ballot if residents collect signatures of registered voters. They need signatures from 10% of the amount of people who voted in the previous municipal election. The issue then goes on the ballot for passage by the general electorate.

It is possible that some version of reform would be on the ballot in 2004.

Check our website for more details.

CLEAN INITIATIVE UPDATE

Crime is continuing its steady decline in most Cincinnati neighborhoods and city officials and community activists are encouraged.

Overall, violent crime is down 7.4% citywide—and at the same time, drug arrests are up a whopping 40.8% citywide.

This is extremely encouraging for those who see the daily effects of drug dealing on City streets.

District Three, which has seen a marked rise in the past 18 months, has seen a 6.5% reduction in crime compared to last year.

Next month, we will feature a more complete six-month review of crime statistics in Cincinnati. This is a critical part of the CLEAN initiative proposed by Mayor Luken earlier this year.

Communities that keep track of their crime numbers are more

knowledgeable about how to prevent crime.

Some other specifics from the May numbers:

- 53% increase year to date in parking tickets
- 29% increase year to date in DUI violations
- 68.8% increase year to date in drug arrests in District Two.

Visit the website for more info:
www.cincinnati-oh.gov.

NORTHSIDE BUSINESS DISTRICT SURPRISES!

Chances are, you've seen community activist Stefanie Sunderland on TV and in Council Chambers testifying about crime in her neighborhood, Northside. If that's all you know about Northside, however, you are really missing out.

The Northside Business District is one of Cincinnati's best kept secrets. It is chock full of shops, restaurants, bars and taverns, and other eclectic community groups and organizations.

"Northside is building on its diversity to experience a true renaissance"

While Northside remains a neighborhood that seeks significant improvement on reducing crime, the small businesses and housing opportunities are continuing to grow and thrive.

For instance, Shake-It Records is a small record store located on

Hamilton Avenue. You can find what is arguably the best collec-



Shake-It Records in Northside

tion of used and independent records in Cincinnati at Shake-It. Additionally, the business sponsors concerts and events in and around Northside.

Or, stop by the Comet, Northside Tavern, or Boswell's Alley, three of the many bars/restaurants in Northside. Each features great food, drink and music. Check them out soon!

The Comet, (www.cometbar.com) is a unique bar, restaurant, and concert hall. Hip to the local music community, The Comet features great music al-

most every night of the week. Check out the great bluegrass on Sundays!

There is so much going on in Northside, the best approach is to just hop in your car (or on the bus) and head up Hamilton Avenue. One only needs to stop and walk a few blocks to discover the hidden gems of Northside.

Fortunately for Northside, they have a committed group of activists, neighborhood groups, and church organizations who promote and support the neighborhood.



The new 1000 Hands Playground in Northside.

To learn more about Northside, visit www.northside.net.



SPOTLIGHT ON LINCOLN REC CENTER



Last week, the Lincoln Community Center reopened after a major reconstruction project. The West End rec center receives a new weight room, and a new gym among other amenities.

The new building also joins with the Community Center with the Learning Center, which was located nearby.

One of the most laudable additions in the renovated building is the Teen Room. This new room is filled with activities geared for teens: pool tables, ping pong tables, computers, video



games and card tables.

The goal is to make the Center as accessible as possible to teens in the area and get them involved in activities at the

Community Center.

All of Cincinnati's 29 community centers offer a broad range of activities for people of all ages. There are tournaments for almost any sport, courses in karate and arts and crafts, and even a day camp for younger children during the summer. And everything is offered at the lowest price possible: admission for adults (ages 18 to 49) is just \$10, and for seniors (50+) the price is only \$3.

Visit www.cincyrec.org for more information about rec centers!

OFFICE OF MAYOR CHARLIE LUKEN

City of Cincinnati
City Hall
801 Plum Street, Room 150
Cincinnati, Ohio 45202

Phone: 513-352-3250
Fax: 513-352-5201
Email: charlie.luken@cincinnati-oh.gov

*This newsletter is also
online at
www.cincinnati-oh.gov*

DELIVER TO:

Letter from the Mayor

Dear Cincinnati:

It has been a busy month for the City of Cincinnati—here are a few highlights:

- Settled a 2 year contract with the Firefighters Union, granting raises and increasing the death benefit for firefighters
- Passed the recommendations from the Economic Development Task Force, allowing for easier and better development strategies in Downtown
- Broke ground on the first school in the CPS rebuilding plan, Rockdale Elementary, highlighted in last month's newsletter
- Celebrated the grand opening of the Contemporary Arts Center, a build-

ing that the New York Times called the most important building constructed since the end of the Cold War

As you can see, the tide is turning in the right direction—Cincinnati is on the move, and everywhere I go I am surrounded by people who are once again bullish on the direction of the City.

Soon, we will be a City known for its progressive development policies, fair methods of fighting crime, and incredible community spirit.

Next month, I will release a comprehensive report detailing Cincinnati's progress in the area of race relations. I am proud of our record in this area, and I can't wait for the world to

see how far we have come together since April of 2001.

We are not going to stop the progress in our City and especially in our neighborhoods.

Until next month, keep up the good work in your communities, and I hope to hear from you soon.

Sincerely,



Charlie Luken
Mayor, City of Cincinnati



Mayor Luken can be reached
at : charlie.luken@cincinnati-oh.gov or at 513-352-3250.